

**Minutes of the Sevington with Finberry Parish Council Annual Parish Meeting  
on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2025 at the Chamber of Commerce at 7pm**

In attendance: Cllr Paul Bartlett, Ashford Borough Councillor (Sevington Ward)  
Cllr Dawnie Nilssen, Ashford Borough Councillor (Highfield Ward)  
Darren Coppins, Chairman of the Sevington with Finberry Parish Council  
Cllrs Forgione, Lemon, Martin and Townsend plus Tracey Block, Clerk to the Parish Council

1.	<b>Welcome</b>
	The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2.	<b>Report from Ward Councillors, Kent County Council</b>
	No reports were received.
3.	<b>Report from Paul Bartlett</b>
	<p><b>IBF</b></p> <p>A planning application is expected shortly from DfT regarding making the IBF permanent. Issues to address as part of the planning meeting will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HGV parking – please report inappropriate lorry parking to <a href="mailto:parkingcustomercare@ashford.gov.uk">parkingcustomercare@ashford.gov.uk</a> so ABC can explore additional powers to fine drivers around the IBF</li> <li>• Littering and the state of the verges is disgraceful and gives power to our argument that increased powers are needed by the Council (ABC in this case) to tackle this.</li> <li>• Better maintenance of the Buffer Zone and ensuring planting is replaced when it dies is necessary</li> <li>• Planting is needed on A20270 Link Road to ensure the impact of the security fencing is softened.</li> <li>• Live animal checks are expected to start at the end of 2025.</li> </ul> <p>These issues were all brushed under the carpet when the IBF had temporary consent. It was originally due to close on 31st December 2025 as the old government believed the need was temporary as the IBF is used for "trusted traders" and the checks could be carried out at the place of departure or arrival not in transit.</p> <p><b>Finberry Village Centre</b></p> <p>The Church Commissioners for England (CCE) have full planning consent for the development of the village centre under planning ref 19/01232/AS. The CCE successfully marketed the local centre site, identifying a preferred bidder (a local centre specialist) for the main commercial elements. The CCE are continuing to progress contractual matters, and the preferred bidder has also commenced pre-application planning discussions with ABC. A detailed planning application is anticipated being submitted later in 2025, though a fixed programme for this is currently being finalised.</p> <p><b>Community Centre</b></p> <p>ABC have also made some progress with the Finberry Community Centre and Sports Courts project with Crest (this one is not with the CCE). ABC have produced a design brief based on the s106 with the aim of setting up the vision for the site and have more structured conversations with Crest going forward. This was shared with Crest and ABC have had a positive meeting with Crest and planning. Crest will now produce revised drawings and costing in accordance with the specification provided. This will take around 7 weeks. ABC have promised to keep me informed of progress and share the plans as soon as they are available.</p>

	<p>It is hoped that progress on these issues will help deliver Finberry as originally envisaged on 2002 with the right economic activity and public services, while conserving and enhancing the natural and local environment. Further work is needed on supported housing and footpath/cyclepath access to the town centre.</p> <p><b>Local Plan</b></p> <p>I have a meeting with Council officers next Wednesday to discuss the local plan approach to Sevington and the possible extension towards Mersham. Watch this space!</p> <p><b>Finberry Bus Service</b></p> <p>The delay in the bus service starting is securing ANPR cameras on the Northern Link Road. The delay is twofold (i) ensuring the ANPR cameras at the Bridgefield Accommodation Bridge can be installed and work (in that there are enough transgressors to enable the project to "wash its face" commercially). The camera installation on the accommodation bridge is delayed due to the developers, Taylor Wimpey / Persimmon, not delivering lighting sufficient to enable KCC and Highways England (HE) to adopt (it goes over the A2070 which is why HE are involved), (ii) securing Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) funding from HM Government to cover the capital costs for the outlay on the cameras. KCC will not adopt the Northern Link Road until there the viable enforcement system is in place.</p> <p><b>Devolution</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On 21st March, the 14 principal authorities in Kent submitted the Kent Interim Plan for Local Government Reorganisation. A final proposal by November. The plan outlines two potential structures (either three or four unitary councils). Key issues raised in the submission include: funding for major points of entry, legacy debt (and assets) management, local plans and the transition between planning authorities and engagement with stakeholders and residents before finalising proposals. Importantly, the paper acknowledges the role of parish and town councils in discussions.</li> <li>ABC is exploring the potential for community governance reviews for areas without existing Parish, Community or Town Councils. A survey is set for circulation to engage parish and town councils before the November final submission. A special meeting will be arranged to allow councils to further engage in discussions in June.</li> </ul>
4.	<b>Report from Dawnie Nilsson</b>
	<p>Cllr Nilsson apologised for not attending the beacon lighting and congratulated Cllr Bartlett on his Marathon success.</p> <p>Cllr Nilsson also was pleased that the application for the Starbucks drive-thru has been refused.</p> <p>The no parking sign for Church Road are still being sought.</p> <p>The double yellow lines in the road still need refreshing.</p>
5.	<b>Financial report</b>
	The Parish Council outgoings were £27,626.39 and income was £15360.00.
6.	<b>Parish Council Chairman's Report</b>
	<p>Since becoming Chairman in May 2024 I have had the pleasure of celebrating two lighting of the Parish Beacon in the Sevington playing fields, in June 2024 for D-Day 80 and again in May 2025 for VE Day 80.</p> <p>We have as a council challenged inappropriate development with some success, whilst pursuing a high quality of development across the parish.</p> <p>We held an annual litter pick at Finberry, which whilst damp, still saw community involvement and I</p>

	<p>look forward to the next one.</p> <p>A number of meetings have been held with Crest in relation to Finberry and we look forward to an ongoing, more open relationship in respect of the future of Finberry,</p> <p>Plans for the Finberry community centre are coming together with the opportunity for the parish council to have an active part in its future.</p> <p>And we continue to pursue resolution to poor road conditions and parking issues in the Highfield ward.</p> <p>Over the coming year I hope that we continue to achieve good results with future challenges including the impending IBF planning application</p> <p>I would like us all to consider what opportunities the coming year may have in making meaningful improvements and changes to our parish that we can all get involved with.</p>
<b>7.</b>	<b>Questions from the audience</b>
	<p>Cllr Bartlett was asked whether the cameras at Beaver Road have been a success. He responded that this is a success. When Taylor Wimpey/Persimmon provide lighting on the link road between Finberry and Bridgefield, Highways England will adopt and cameras will be installed.</p> <p>Cllr Nilsson noted that she has been told that the litter at the IBF will be patrolled. Cllr Forgione offered to keep Cllr Nilsson informed.</p>